

**WASHINGTON STATE CRIMINAL STREET GANG
PREVENTION & INTERVENTION
MULTI-SITE EVALUATION:
INTERIM EVALUATION REPORT**

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I. General Background

In August 2012, the Washington State Partnership Council on Juvenile Justice (WA-PCJJ) awarded funds to two sites – Tacoma and Yakima – to implement Street Gang Prevention and Intervention (Gang P&I) project services for an 11-month period (August 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013). These funds were released in response to the State Legislature's recognition that street gang activities are a serious problem that threatens the long-term economic, social, and public safety interests of Washington State. The City of Tacoma and the Yakima County Courts provide administrative oversight of these projects in their respective communities. In Yakima County, the County contributed \$60,000 toward the mobilization process with the City of Yakima contributing \$140,000 toward implementation of program services.

The Tacoma project is primarily focused on five neighborhoods known to have a high concentration of gang activity: New Tacoma, Central Tacoma, Eastside, South End and South Tacoma. In Yakima County, funds are distributed across three regions that have been working toward resolving gang related issues these are the cities of Yakima, Sunnyside, and Toppenish. The projects aim to serve two specific populations of youth: gang involved and youth at high-risk of gang involvement either because of sibling involvement or because of the presence of risk factors that place them at higher risk e.g., physical violence, delinquent behaviors, poor parental supervision, poor school attitude, and/or poor attendance.

These projects are implementing Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) research-based Comprehensive Gang Model¹, a framework for the coordination of multiple, anti-gang strategies to address gang violence and youth involvement including: 1) Community Mobilization, 2) Opportunities Provision, 3) Social Interventions, 4) Suppression, and 5) Organizational Change and Development. Strategies are developed and implemented across multiple public and private agencies including law enforcement, education, criminal justice, social services, and faith-based organizations. The overarching goal of these two projects is to reduce criminal activities and promote pro-social development among youth engaged in program services. The projects adopted three targeted outcomes, each with their respective indicators, to assess progress toward this goal. These are to: 1) Implement a comprehensive gang prevention and intervention model through community mobilization and resource development, 2) Build community knowledge through partnerships about gang violence and appropriate prevention and intervention strategies, and 3) Reduce risk factors and increase protective factors amongst youth involved in social interventions.

This interim report summarizes the evaluation status of the first half of the project period. The report is based on information collected from interviews with the project's directors, coordinators, and other key program staff; site visits, and a review of program data collected to date.

II. Project Implementation and Operations

During the interim reporting period, project implementation and operations have centered mainly on building community capacity to implement the proposed comprehensive gang model framework. In Yakima County, Magellan Consultancy, the contracted strategic consultant, in collaboration with the Project Director and Coordinator, have been working with the three sites – Yakima, Sunnyside and Toppenish – to adopt the proposed gang model framework. The site has established an oversight committee (Gang Commission) as well as community-based anti-gang coalitions in each of the three communities, with each community adopting an individualized implementation plan. Three regional coordinators were hired to oversee the planning and development tasks of the project, with these positions filled in October for the Sunnyside and Toppenish sites. Implementation across the three sites varies, with this dependent upon stakeholder buy-in, local capacity, and access to resources. For example, the City of Toppenish's model will focus on three of the five strategies – community mobilization,

¹ It's important to note that the Yakima County project is adopting a modified version of the OJJDP model, while Tacoma is implementing the model as designed.

social interventions, and organizational change. Specifically, the plan is focused on the adoption of the Phoenix Curriculum, an evidence-based gang prevention program, in four elementary schools and one middle school and providing coordinated youth development services for intensive behavior change targeting 20 moderate to high-risk youth. Similarly, the City of Sunnyside includes the implementation of the Phoenix Curriculum focused at the 6th grade level, with intervention services targeting 20 moderate to high risk youth. The City of Yakima is further along in the implementation of the full program framework, with strong support from the City Council. Contracts for the delivery of program strategies were executed in December with five local agencies selected to deliver services. The city is poised to begin fully implementing services across the five strategies. Through the various service offerings, the project anticipates serving 20-40 moderate to high risk youth. Across all three sites, program services are somewhat behind schedule due to the time needed to gain stakeholder support; however, as of the mid-December, each community was fully engaged and the implementation of program services is scheduled for January 2013.

The City of Tacoma is adopting OJJDP's Comprehensive Gang Model. As with Yakima, much of the project activities during this interim period have centered on building capacity, designing an implementation plan, and identifying community partners/stakeholders to deliver program services. The site is working closely with the National Gang Center (NGC) to ensure alignment with the model program. The staff from the NGC have conducted trainings and regularly provides technical assistance on program implementation. The project has an Executive Committee in place, with members actively engaged in the implementation planning process. Local community agencies have been hired to deliver social intervention, prevention and outreach program services. In November, the NGC conducted a training for local providers on Street Outreach, with training of the Multidisciplinary Intervention Team scheduled for late January 2013. The project anticipates serving 9 families of gang involved youth, 15 gang involved youth, and 60 youth at-risk of gang involvement through its various services.

III. Evaluation Methodology and Status to Date

The evaluation incorporates quantitative and qualitative methods for an integrated approach. Quantitative methods include data from pre-post assessment/screening tools regarding such indicators as the number and characteristics of participants, level, and type of program participation, and risk and protective factor indicators including aggression/defiance, peer deviance, criminal history, school attendance and gang involvement. Qualitative data are collected through interviews with program staff and stakeholders, with these data utilized to inform program statistics. Strategies for outcomes related data make use of the WARNS (Washington Assessment of the Risk and Needs of Students), conducted at intake, four months, and program exit. Information for process data will be collected from project records, referral sources, attendance and participation records, case management plans, and interviews.

The data collection system and supporting strategies are in place. In November, program staff were trained in the use of WARNS screening tools, and in the evaluation data collection process. Participants have completed user agreements and confidentiality procedures are in place. All instruments include detailed protocols for their use. Data are collected monthly, with minor problems identified, and resolved.

IV. Progress to Date

The project's 2012-2013 evaluation logic model outlined three targeted outcomes with specific indicators used to identify their accomplishment during the project period. The following section outlines progress to date toward achieving stated outcomes.

1. Implement a comprehensive gang prevention and intervention model through community mobilization and resource development in targeted sites as evidenced by: 1) Number and types of steering committee members, 2) Number and topics of steering committee meetings, 3) Number and types of core strategies implemented, 4) Evidence of data based decision-making, and 5) 70% or greater fidelity to evidence-based comprehensive gang model. **Status: Mixed progress.**

- To date, 14 Steering Committee meetings have been conducted, with representatives from law enforcement, corrections, juvenile justice, schools, social services, local government, faith-based institutions, employment program, community residents, and other stakeholders. Tacoma's

Steering Committee does not currently have representation from juvenile justice. Composition of Steering Committees at the Yakima County sites varies considerably, due in part to the availability of resources within each of the project sites. Topical areas of discussion have focused mainly on implementation, development plans, and workgroup activities.

- Sites reported implementing a variety of targeted strategies including community mobilization, opportunities provision, social interventions, suppression, and organizational change/development. The majority of activities in this area have been related to organizational change/development with sites focused on completing implementation plans, coordinating with community partners, and developing data collection systems. Tacoma has been conducting social intervention strategies with project partners since mid-September. In Yakima County, these services have been limited, as contracts with partners were not completed until early December.
- Information on evidence-based decision-making and model fidelity is not available due to the brevity of program services. Data on these indicators will be tracked throughout project services.

Corrective Action: 1) Ensure representation of all key stakeholders in Steering Committee meetings, 2) Implement prevention and intervention activities across the five core strategies, 3) Ensure use of community-level and youth-centered data to drive program decision-making, and 4) Conduct follow up training with providers, as needed, in model design to ensure adherence to fidelity. **Timeline:** February 2013.

2. Build community knowledge through partnerships about gang violence and appropriate prevention and intervention strategies as measured by: 1) Number and types of multidisciplinary (MDIT) team members, 2) Number and topics of MDIT meetings, 3) Number of meetings conducted and number and type of community partners represented, 4) Number and type of training events conducted with community partners, 5) Number and type of technical assistance requests received from community providers, 6) Number and type program materials developed and information distributed to community partners, 7) 75% of participants will report satisfaction with trainings and/or technical assistance opportunities, 8) 75% of stakeholders report increased knowledge of gang violence, and 9) 75% of stakeholders reported increased knowledge of appropriate prevention and intervention strategies. **Status:** *Mixed progress.*

- MDT teams are not currently in place, however, all sites report that team development is underway with implementation to be completed in January 2013.
- To date, 23 in-service/trainings have been conducted with representatives from law enforcement, juvenile justice, schools, service providers, community residents, and other stakeholders in attendance. These trainings have focused on orienting project partners to program services, eligibility and the referral process, street outreach, and conducting assessments/screenings.
- Sites reported receiving 11 technical assistance requests from community partners during the interim reporting period related to organizational development and community mobilization, assessment, and implementation planning.
- Data on satisfaction, knowledge, and awareness has not been collected as in-service/trainings have been focused on internal project staff. Data on these indicators will be tracked as community-based trainings are offered.

Corrective Action: 1) Establish community-based MDIT teams with appropriate representation across agency providers, 2) Establish protocols for case management planning of gang involved youth and train MDIT team members, 3) Offer community-based trainings to increase awareness and knowledge related to youth gangs, 4) Distribute and collect satisfaction surveys at training offerings, and 5) Develop and implement media campaign/outreach activities to raise awareness of project strategies/activities.

Timeline: January – March 2013.

3. Reduce risk factors and increase protective factors among youth involved in social interventions as evidenced by: 1) Number and type of youth referred to program services, 2) Number and type of youth enrolled in program services, 3) Number and type of youth who complete program services, 4) Decrease percent of enrolled youth that score mod/high on **aggression/defiance** scale as compared to baseline, 5) Decrease percent of enrolled youth that score mod/high on **peer deviance**

scale as compared to baseline, 6) Reduce percent of enrolled youth that report any **criminal history** (e.g., arrests, charged with crime) as compared to baseline, 7) Improve percent of enrolled youth reported as regularly attending school as compared to baseline, 8) Reduce recidivism among youth offenders as compared to program entry, and 9) Reduce number of youth identified as gang involved as compared to program entry. **Status: Progressing.**

- 50 youth were referred to program services during the interim period: 40 from Tacoma and 10 from Yakima. Among these youth, most (64%) were female and non-white (86%). Youth ranged in age from 11 to 22 years; the average age was 14.7 years. At time of referral, 40% were reported as gang involved youth. Girls were more likely to be gang involved as compared to their male peers (60% vs. 40%, respectively).
- Forty-one youth were enrolled in program services (6 Yakima, 35 Tacoma), representing 82% of those referred. Among enrolled youth, 64% were female and 90% were non-white. Youth ranged in age from 11 -22 years; the average age was 14.9 years. Nearly all (37 or 90%) youth were enrolled in school, with three expelled and one youth not enrolled. Three-quarters of youth (76%) were high school-aged. Of those enrolled, 85% were reported as attending regularly. Single parent household comprised of 44%. Nearly half of these youth had some degree of gang affiliation, specifically, 22% (9) were members or known associates, 22% (9) that were siblings of a gang member or associate, and 5 % (2) who were previous members/associates. Of these youth, 51% (21) reported no gang involvement. Most youth (54%) had no current or previous involvement with the legal system.
- Progress for outcome indicators 3.3 – 3.9 were not available due to brevity of program services.

Corrective Action: 1) Implement social intervention strategies, 2) Identify means to increase referral of youth to program services, 3) Increase engagement of male participants, 4) Establish internal protocols to address potential disproportionate minority contact (DMC) issues, and 5) Continue to monitor referral processes to ensure targeted youth are referred to and engaged in program services; conduct follow up training with community providers and needed. **Timeline: February 2013.**

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

The implementation of a comprehensive approach to criminal street gang violence requires engagement and buy-in across multiple sectors of the community. As such, project operations have centered mainly on building community capacity in order to implement the proposed gang model framework during the interim reporting period. Consequently, limited service delivery to youth and their families has occurred. The City of Tacoma is somewhat ahead of project implementation as compared to Yakima County and its partner communities. Regardless, both projects currently have systems and infrastructure in place for the model framework including agreements from local service providers to deliver social intervention strategies. As such, these projects will be better prepared to place a stronger focus on community and youth-centered strategies and activities in the latter half of the project (January – June 2013).

There are several areas of weaknesses that need to be addressed if these projects are to reach the stated outcomes by the end of the project period. For Yakima, ensuring a high level of stakeholder engagement within each of the three communities on the project design is central to success across all three outcomes. Moving forward, a strong emphasis will be placed on model fidelity for both project sites; therefore, adherence to implementation plans and timelines is imperative. Secondly, in both Tacoma and Yakima, multi-disciplinary teams need to be formed to provide case management and oversight of gang involved youth. These teams, comprised of multiple and diverse agency representatives, should be provided with training and protocols to appropriately address the needs of gang-involved youth through referral and case management to community-based resources. An equally important task is to address the issues related to recruitment and referral of program participants, with emphasized attention on increasing engagement amongst males and assessing potential DMC concerns. To date, only 36% of participants were male and only 10% are white.

In closing, it is in the best interest of the projects to implement the stated recommendations and attend to program fidelity. In doing so these projects will be better prepared to meet stated outcomes in the second half of the program year. The evaluator will monitor the status of recommendations in the coming months.